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AUTHOR McHaney, Jane; Impey, William
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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a review of the research and professional literature on staff development, an analysis of the characteristics associated with effective staff development programs, and recommendations for the design of effective staff development programs based on that research. The studies cited deal with: (1) the functions of staff development programs; (2) characteristics of a coherent program of staff development; (3) essential elements of effective staff development programs; (4) features of effective staff development programs; (5) a research-based process for designing inservice education; (6) a model of an effective tool for analyzing the evaluation staff development programs; and (8) assessing and improving the effectiveness of a staff development program viewed as a curriculum development problem. Thirty-three references are included. (JD)

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Staff Development: A Review of the Literature on Effective Programs and Recommendations for Future Program Development

Dr. Jane McHaney
Dr. William Impey
Kennesaw State College

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The purpose of this paper is to present a review of the research and professional literature on staff development, an analysis of the characteristics associated with effective staff development programs, and recommendations for the design of effective staff development programs based on that research.

Staff development has been defined as the totality of educational and personal experiences that contribute to the improvement of an individual's competence and satisfaction in an assigned professional role (Dale, 1982) and as a program designed to "alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understanding of school persons toward an articulated end" (Griffin, 1983, p. 2). Dale (1982) argues that the functions of staff development programs should include:

> -Inservice education - improving skills; implementing curricula, procedures; expanding subject matter knowledge; planning and organizing instruction; and increasing personal effectiveness.
>
> -Organization development - building program climate; solving problems; increasing communication among staff members.
>
> -Consultation - conducting workshops; assisting with building staff development, implementation, and evaluation; assisting with administrative planning.
>
> -Communication and coordination - assisting with inter-building communication; organizing and providing information about resources; assisting with communication between administration and staff; providing central coordinating service.
>
> -Leadership - providing suggestions for new curricular, instructional approaches; identifying problems and suggesting solutions; informing about innovative approaches; researching ideas for evaluating practices and procedures; providing assistance with innovation processes.
>
> -Evaluation - conducting needs assessments; evaluating resources; evaluating resources; evaluating staff development efforts. (p. 31)

Thomas Gusky (1986) argues that the ultimate end of staff development programs is "in most cases . . . the improvement of student learning. In other words, staff development programs are a systematic attempt to bring about change - change in the classroom practices of teachers, change in their beliefs and attitudes, and change in the learning outcomes of students" (p. 5). The differences between the definitions and purposes of staff development offered by Gusky and Dale exemplify the diversity in the current approaches to staff development.

Since the beginning of staff development efforts in American schools in the early 19th century (Richey, 1957), the effectiveness of those efforts has been questioned, criticized as "uninspiring" (Corey, 1957), and even characterized as

"the slum of American education" (Rubin, 1971). Over the past 15 years, researchers concerned about the ineffectiveness of inservice education and staff development programs have conducted numerous studies to identify the elements that characterize effective programs. However, although there are now over 9,200 publications listed in ERIC and we know a great deal about the factors that influence the effectiveness of staff development programs, few programs have been built upon this expanding foundation of knowledge and research. In Issues and Problems in Professional Development, a paper commissioned by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory in 1985, ten characteristics of a "coherent" program of staff development were identified:

> Our review of the literature and our professional experiences suggest that the following . . . criteria can be applied in reviewing and designing programs of staff development.
>
> 1. The program has a mission statement, policy guidelines, goals, resources, budget and personnel. (Qualitative standards need to be set to assess each of these. For example, it could be decided that the mission statement should be undergirded by an explict set of assumptions about adult learning and development or the director of the program should have a line position of authority with budgetory control within the organizational structure).
> 2. Teachers as the primary participants have a preeminent voice in the governance of the program.
> 3. Determination of the program agenda (needs assessment) is a multidimensional process. It engages teachers in the identification of problems which affect them and their students as part of this process. (This includes consideration of the how, where, when, with whom, and why of staff development as well as the question of what is the primary interest or need.)
> 4. The program is able to address multiple, interrelated purposes. (These could include personal, cognitive, theoretical, professional, and career needs).
> 5. The program acknowledges the reality of different teacher roles and role-relationships and the implications of these for staff development. (In the former instance, the primary purpose of staff development could be to address an unrealistic role; in the latter to leverage a specific role-relationship into an on-going growth activity).
> 6. The program is able to employ a variety of strategies and forms of development beyond the workshop and lecture-discussion formats.
> 7. There is evidence that staff development is viewed as a continuing developmental process; that is, specific projects are planned in consideration of the effects of the school context and follow-up is provided in that setting.
> 8. The program is able to support a skilled person or persons responsible for planning and managing activities at the school site. (There are a variety of growth activities which can be embedded in the on-going activities of

teachers and the program attends to this).

9. The program addresses a balanced agenda of goals; that is, individual goals are accomodated within and outside the context of broader institutional goals whether at the state, local, or shool level.

10. While schools generally are a realistic unit for the design of a staff development plan; attention is given to individuals and especially to key functioning groups within the school. There are a variety of activities planned with expert resources outside the school context.(pp.148-150)

Burden and Wallace (1983) summarized the essential elements of effective staff development programs derived from the research conducted by Bruce Joyce, Gordon Lawrence, Judith Little and others as:

Collaboration: Organizing and planning staff development must be collaborative. The more collaborative the approach the greater the opportunities for mutual contribution to aims, perspectives, and methods. The more closely that collaboration engages persons in the examination of classroom practices, the greater will be the commitment to collegiality and reciprocity, especially by principals and teachers (Little, 1981).

Participation: Professional development should involve the entire school staff including teachers and administrators (Far West Laboratory, 1981). Staff development programs that place teachers in an active role, generating ideas and constructing materials are more likely to succeed (Lawrence, Baker, Hansen, and Elzie, 1974). Staff development should be based on a developmental rather than a deficit model. Teachers and administrators should feel that inservice education is a part of continued growth rather than remedial training (King and Golinda, 1980).

Planning: Planning, particularly long range planning, of staff development is essential to effective implementation of instructional improvement activities. At least three levels of staff development planning are needed in most school districts: (1) the overall plan, (2) the project or program plan, and (3) the session plan (Hartzog and Hundley, 1981).

Assessment: Accurate assessment of needs is one of the most critical characteristics of staff development. In order to determine what improvements are necessary, staff development should support inquiry into concerns of teachers, administrators and parents at the school level. This should focus on analysis of what is happening (e.g., teacher use of effective teaching strategies, administrator leadership skills), integration of findings based on school goals, planning of improvement designed to improve the instructional program based on school goals, and assessment of what happens as a result of the school-wide and individual interventions that are used (Far West Laboratory, 1981).

Focus: The concerns and needs of students must be the ultimate focus of any staff development program. Students' needs must be recognized and the impact of staff development activities on students must be taken into consideration (National Inservice Network, 1980). Staff development should exhibit specificity and concreteness in discussion and practice that supports the translation of ideas into practice (Little, 1981).

School Based: School based and school focused staff development is far more effective than other modes of inservice when the goal is long range instructional improvement. Teachers and administrators are more likely to benefit from inservice activities that focus on the general effort of the school than they are from one time, "single shot" programs (Lawrence, Baker, Hansen, and Elzie, 1974).

Training Components: There are many kinds of inservice methods and modes for delivering staff development. Most of these are familiar to educators and have been used in a variety of combinations. There is now enough research to identify clearly the effectiveness of these components. Based on an analysis of over 200 inservice studies, when all of the following components are operating in an inservice program, school change and improvement is most likely to occur:

1. Presentation of theory or description of skills or models of teaching;
2. Modeling or demonstration of skills or models of teaching;
3. Practice in simulated and classroom settings;
4. Structured and open-ended feedback, provision of information about performance.
5. Coaching for application: hands on, in-classroom assistance with the transfer of skills and strategies to classroom.

If any of these components are omitted, the impact of the training will be weakened in the sense that fewer numbers of people will progress to the transfer level -- the only level that has significant meaning for school improvement (Joyce and Showers, 1980).

A summary of the features of effective staff development programs is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

---

* COLLABORATION
  Collaboration in organizing and planning staff development increases commitment to make staff development successful.

* PARTICIPATION
  Staff development programs that place administrators, teachers, and parents in an active role are more likely to succeed.

* PLANNING
  Long range planning of staff development increases conformity with school district goals.

* ASSESSMENT
  Staff development is most effective when based on professional needs and concerns of school employees.

* FOCUS
  Successful staff development programs exhibit specificity and concreteness in discussion as well as practice that supports the translation of ideas into practice.

* SCHOOL-BASED
  School-based/school-focused staff development is far more effective than other types of inservice education.

Table 1 (Cont'd)

* TRAINING COMPONENTS
Effective staff development programs contain training that includes presentation of theory, modeling, practice, feedback, and coaching.

The RPTIM Model of Staff Development described in Chapter 4 of the 1981 ASCD Yearbook provides a research-based process for designing inservice education that is systematic and comprehensive. This model identifies what happens before, after, and during the planning and training, and specifies the practices that should be used in designing staff development programs (Wood, Thompson, and Russell, 1981).

The RPTIM Model is based on ten basic beliefs or assumptions. They include the beliefs that:

1. All school personnel need inservice throughout their careers.
2. Significant improvement in educational practice takes considerable time and long-term inservice programs.
3. Inservice education should focus on improving the quality of school programs.
4. Educators are motivated to learn new things when they have some control over their learning and are free from threat.
5. Educators vary widely in their competencies and readiness to learn.
6. Professional growth requires commitment to new performance norms.
7. School climate influences the success of professional development.
8. The school is the most appropriate unit or target of change in education.
9. School districts have the primary responsibility for providing the resources for inservice training.
10. The principal is the key element for adoption and continued use of new practices and programs in a school.

The five stages that grew out of these assumptions and the research literature include Readiness, Planning, Training, Implementation, and Maintenance (RPTIM). Each stage is defined by a set of practices that identify specific tasks that are to be completed in the stage and the personnel who make key decisions. The 38 practices that are included in the RPTIM Model are noted in Figure 1. A more detailed explanation of the practices with examples of how they have been implemented is presented in the 1981 ASCD Yearbook. (Wood, Thompson, and Russell, 1981).

Figure 1. RPTIM Model Practices.

Stage I: Readiness

1. A positive school climate is developed before other staff development efforts are attempted.
2. Goals for school improvement are written collaboratively by teachers, parents, building administrators, and central office administrators.
3. The school has a written list of goals for the improvement of school programs during the next three to five years.
4. The school staff adopts and supports goals for the improvement of school programs.
5. Current school practices are examined to determine which ones are congruent with the school's goals for improvement before staff development activities are planned.
6. Current educational practices not yet found in the school are examined to determine which ones are congruent with the school's goals for improvement before staff development activities are planned.
7. The school staff identifies specific plans to achieve the school's goals for improvement.
8. Leadership and support during the initial stage of staff development activity are the responsibility of the principal and central office staff.

Stage II: Planning

9. Differences between desired and actual practices in the school are examined to identify the inservice needs of the staff.
10. Planning of staff development activities relies, in part, on information gathered directly from school staff members.
11. Inservice planners use information about the learning styles of participants when planning staff development activities.
12. Staff development programs include objectives for inservice activities covering as much as five years.
13. The resources available for use in staff development are identified prior to planning inservice activities.
14. Staff development programs include plans for activities to be conducted during the following three to five years.
15. Specific objectives are written for staff development activities.
16. Staff development objectives include objectives for attitude development (new outlooks and feelings).
17. Staff development objectives include objectives for increased knowledge (new information and understanding).
18. Staff development objectives include objectives for skill development (new work behaviors).
19. Leadership during the planning of inservice programs is shared among teachers and administrators.

Stage III: Training

20. Staff development activities include the use of learning teams in which two to seven participants share and discuss learning experiences.
21. Individual school staff members choose objectives for their own professional learning.
22. Individual school staff members choose the staff development activities in which they participate.
23. Staff development activities include experiential activities in which participants try out new behaviors and techniques.
24. Peers help to teach one another by serving as inservice leaders.
25. School principals participate in staff development activities with their staffs.
26. Leaders of staff development activities are selected according to their expertise rather than their position.
27. As participants in staff development activities become increasingly competent, leadership behavior becomes less directive or task-oriented.
28. As participants in staff development activities become increasingly confident in their abilities, the leader transfers increasing responsibility to the participants.

Stage IV: Implementation

29. After participating in inservice activities, participants have access to support services to help implement new behaviors as part of their regular work.
30. School staff members who attempt to implement new learnings are recognized for their efforts.
31. The leaders of staff development activities visit the job setting, when needed, to help the inservice participants refine or review previous learning.
32. School staff members use peer supervision to assist one another in implementing new work behaviors.
33. Resources are allocated to support the implementation of new practices following staff development activities (funds to purchase new instructional materials, time for planning, and so forth).
34. The school principal actively supports efforts to implement changes in professional behavior.

Stage V: Maintenance

35. A systematic program of instructional supervision is used to monitor new work behavior.
36. School staff members utilize systematic techniques of self-monitoring to maintain new work behaviors.
37. Student feedback is used to monitor new practices.
38. Responsibility for the maintenance of new school practices is shared by both teachers and administrators.

The model of teacher development outlined by Robert McNergney (1980) provides an effective tool for analyzing and evaluating staff development programs in the larger context of the search for ways to improve the effectiveness of teacher education.

> Teacher educators will be taking a positive step toward supporting teacher competence, independence, and satisfaction in teaching when they stop looking for the best method of teacher education and start responding to teachers as persons with unique needs and abilities. This affirmation is based on three assumptions. First, as already noted, there is no one superior method that can support all teachers in the accomplishment of all objectives. Second, if a single approach to developing teachers' capabilities is inappropriate, it follows that teacher educators must build a repetoire of diverse strategies to call upon when conditions dictate. Third, effective teacher education is strategic or systematic in its approach to teachers and the tasks they must accomplish. (p. 234)

> To encourage teacher educators to respond to variations in the needs of teachers, we have proposed that teacher development be conceptualized in interactive terms. The terms we suggest are borrowed from Lewin's interaction statement: Behavior is a function of the person and the environment or B = (f) P, E. In keeping with recent developments in research, however, we have extended Lewin's formula by adding a term or dimension of task (T). This revised formula can be applied to teacher education and translated to mean that a teacher's behavior (B) is a function of the person (P) who serves as teacher, the environment (E) the teacher is exposed to, and the task (T) in which the teacher engages; or B = (f) P, E, T. These relationships are depicted in Figure 1.

> Intuitive understanding of the model may be enhanced if the variables are rearranged to read P: T: E = B. This can be translated to mean that different teachers or persons (P) , undertaking various tasks (T), must be supported in different ways (E), in order to demonstrate particular behaviors (B). This transformation allows one to consider, in order, what is meant by: teacher characteristics, teacher tasks, teacher developmental environments, and teacher behaviors. (p. 235)

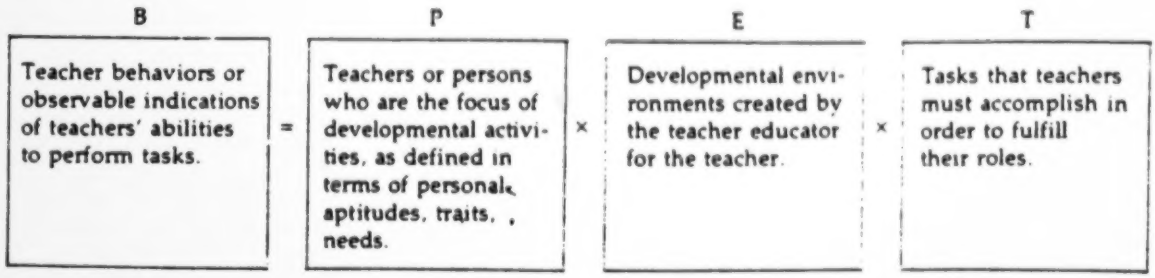

B
Teacher behaviors or observable indications of teachers' abilities to perform tasks.
=
P
Teachers or persons who are the focus of developmental activities, as defined in terms of personal, aptitudes, traits, , needs.
×
E
Developmental environments created by the teacher educator for the teacher.
×
T
Tasks that teachers must accomplish in order to fulfill their roles.

Figure 1. Interactive relationship of teacher behaviors, teacher characteristics, teacher developmental environments, and teacher tasks.

The research on stages of teacher career development provides a rich resource for descriptions of the characteristics of teachers as persons (P). This information can be used as a basis for "tailoring" staff development programs to accommodate teachers' needs at different career stages - to construct the developmental environment (E) for teachers.

Burden and Wallace (1983) summarize the recommendations for planning effective professional development programs derived from research on the stages of teacher development:

> The premise that the stages of teacher development are important in planning effective professional development programs is well accepted in the literature (Andrews, Houston, and Bryant, 1981; Bents and Howey, 1981; Brundage and MacKerscher, 1980; Burden, 1982, and Hall and Loucks, 1978).
>
> Bents and Howey (1981), after reviewing the work of Hunt (1966, 1971) and Hunt and Sullivan (1974) on developmental growth, suggested that staff development programs could be tailored to individual developmental needs and specific learning styles. Less developmentally mature teachers would profit most from highly structured environments, and more developmentally mature teachers could profit from either high or low structured environments. Wilsey and Killion (1982) outlined stages of teacher development and suggested different staff development content and delivery approaches for each stage. Glickman (1981) discussed this issue from a developmental supervision perspective. Christensen, Burke, and Fessler (1983) reviewed a number of studies related to teacher life-span development and reported different teacher characteristics and different staff development needs at each career stage.
>
> In these studies, there are many similarities in the recommendations to match staff development content and delivery modes to the teachers' stage of development. In general, teachers in the early stages need much assistance with the technical skills of teaching and would benefit most from a highly structured, directive staff development program. Practical information and applications would be most useful. Teachers who are a little more advanced developmentally would seek information to add variety to their teaching and would prefer a collaborative approach to staff development and supervision. Teachers at the highest developmental levels would focus on more comples and cross-cutting concerns and would prefer more team types of arrangements and staff development programs that are non-directive. Santmire's (1979) recommendations for four levels of the Conceptual Systems Theory provide additional details when considering different staff development content and delivery modes to match teachers at different development stages.
>
> The relationship between teachers' developmental stages and staff development content and delivery modes can be illustrated schematically (Figure 1).

In the figure, the teachers' developmental stage plane represents the stages that teachers might advance through, from the early survival stage to the advanced, mature stage. The content plane represents the content in staff development programs that would be offered. The delivery mode plane represents the type of supervisory or administrative approach that would be used in delivering the staff development program. This approach may range from a directive to a collaborative to a non-directive supervisory or administrative style. Also within this delivery mode plane, staff developers could use telling, modeling, practice, feedback, and coaching. (pp. 7-9)

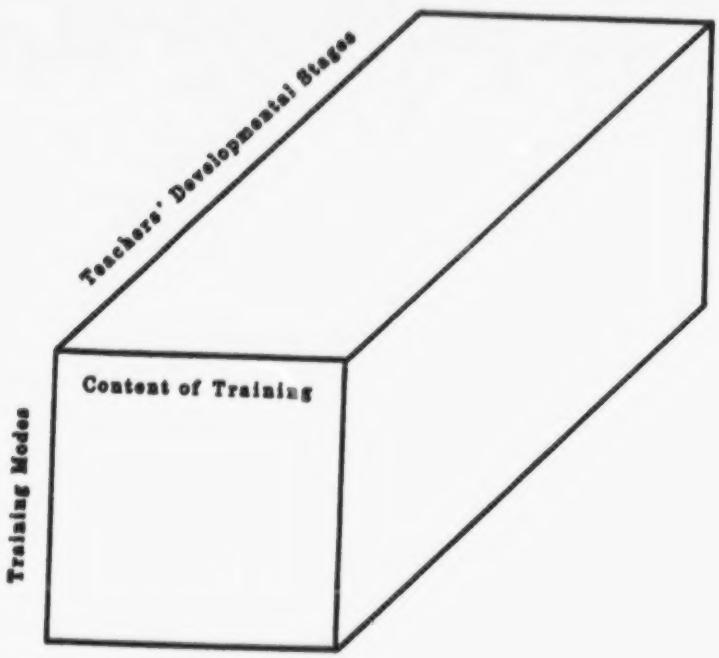
Figure 1

Relationships Between

Teachers Developmental Stages

and

Training Content and Delivery



Assessing and improving the effectiveness of a staff development program may also be viewed as a curriculum development problem. Like curriculum, a staff development program is often more complex than many advocates of change have recognized. "Attempts to improve only small segments of the curriculum will not produce lasting or fundamental changes. These kinds of changes require that the curriculum be dealt with in all its complexity, not with simplistic approaches" (Klein, 1983).

The curriculum model depicted in Figure 1 below was developed by Goodlad and Associates to guide the collection of research data for the Study of Schooling (1977). The model is composes of five perspectives on curriculum, nine curricular elements, and nine qualitative factors - all of which interact and affect the curriculum. The central value of this model for both a curriculum and a program for staff development is that it forces would-be change agents to consider the degree to which their decisions to alter any one component or element affects other elements in an interdependent system. The consistency among the decisions that are made in the design of a staff development program will have a significant impact on the potential value of the program for teachers.

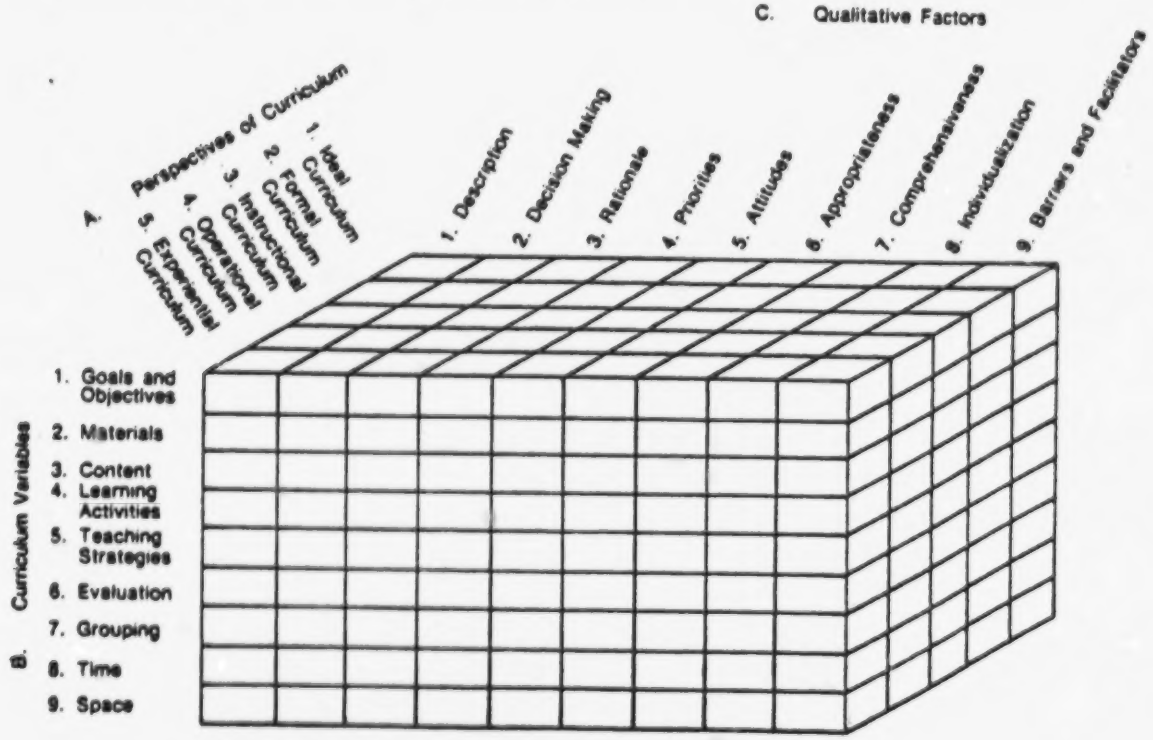


Figure 1. A curriculum framework for a study of schooling.

The design of staff development programs at both the state and local levels , as well as the relationship between state and local programs, is exemplified in Georgia's State Plan for Staff Development (1988) and the Staff Development Handbook 1988-1989 for Marietta City Schools.

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